

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & OPERATIONS

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PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
CHIEF OFFICER: Strategic Director of
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Build happier, healthier and safer communities

Waste and Recycling

Waste Compositional Analysis

The Council's Environment team are undertaking a waste analysis this autumn, to identify the composition of the waste and recycling collected from residents of the borough. The composition of household waste and recycling is forever changing as the economy, our personal behaviours, consumption and recycling habits shift over time.

The information on what is in our waste and recycling bins helps us to drive improvements in reducing general waste and food waste which affect climate change, address contamination problems and it also helps demonstrate what items in what quantities are in our recycling bins. This information enables us to achieve the best value for money when tendering waste and recycling contracts.

As a Council we now undertake these analyses every 2 years, with the last analysis showing that over 40% of the weight of the contents in burgundy bins was food waste with over half of the food waste still edible, in date, or not even used. In the past two years, we have included messages in our calendar packs and leaflets regarding food waste, its impact and the benefits to residents from reducing food waste. On average, families are throwing away £700 a year of food waste that could still be used or needn't have been bought. As an aside, we are awaiting information from Government on how the introduction of mandatory food waste collections across England will be operated and funded.

Waste Enforcement

The Envirocrime team are continuing to investigate and progress enforcement cases for prosecution. However, a continuing delay via the courts in cases being heard, due to a backlog in the judicial system, is limiting our ability to reflect publicly on the good work of the team, as we cannot promote our cases until they have been through the courts. The matter has been raised with DEFRA, seeking their support to liaise with the Ministry of Justice to consider ways to tackle the increasing backlog of cases.

Parks Levelling Up Fund

The Council received £85,000 to be spent at Roe Lee Park, to improve facilities. A number of initiatives have been progressed with the funding and working with the Friends of Roe Lee Park. Diseased Ash trees have been removed and replaced with mature trees. A new community orchard has also been established at the park, the first of its kind within Council parklands, whereby the Friends Group manage the orchard for the local community. The multi-use games areas have been renovated to enhance the play options available, with basketball, netball and hockey as well as football now being available to be played. New CCTV equipment has been provided to help deter and catch those who commit anti-social behaviour. The pond has been desilted, with leftover materials redeployed as a compost within the park. Last but by no means least,

five new pieces of outdoor gym equipment, part of an active trail throughout the park, have also been installed, which includes disability accessible equipment, which ensures as many members of the community as possible can enjoy the facilities.

Public Protection and Environmental Health

Air Quality Monitoring

DEFRA working in partnership with the Council, has installed a new real-time air quality monitor in the Borough. The equipment, which is located at Audley Lane in Blackburn, will monitor smaller particulate matter (known as PM^{2.5}) in the atmosphere for the Automated Urban and Rural Network, which is paid for and run by the Government. PM^{2.5} pollution typically comes from transport (diesel vehicle emissions, brake dust, tyre particles) as well as other sources. This will add to our current real time monitor which measures NO₂ emissions coming from petrol vehicles.

Both the real-time monitors measure background levels of pollution. When combined with the data provided by the 48 static NO_x tubes placed at hotspots around the Borough and maintained by PP&EH. The data will allow us to model air quality even more accurately that we do now. We are required to submit an annual Air Quality Status Report to DEFRA every year; over the last few years our reports have been well received by DEFRA, and this additional data will only improve the standard of these reports. We have also been asked to maintain the equipment under an SLA, so we are actually being paid (a small amount) for having this additional useful resource in the Borough.

Parking Services and Police Joint Operations

There have been two joint parking operations with the Police in relation to evening enforcement of illegal parking (6.00pm – 9.00pm), these took place on the 26th July 23 and 2nd August 23. These operations were deemed by us and the Police as a success, the results are below:

- 26th July 23 – 2 CEOs and 2 Police officers went out on patrol and issued 25 Penalty Charge Notices.
- 2nd August 23 – 4 CEOs and 2 Police Officers went out on patrol and issued 45 Penalty Charge Notices.

We are working with the Police to programme more of these joint operations to take place on a regular basis.

Blakewater Car Park

Construction commenced on the 27th July for the new car park on the old Blakewater Lodge site just off Swallow Drive, the car park will provide 54 parking spaces plus 5 Disabled Bays. The new car park will provide additional parking for the surrounding area and will help reduce the number of vehicles which are parked on the roads and residential areas in the vicinity of the car park. It is anticipated that the car park will open for use by the general public before the end of September 2023.